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Chairman: Mr. Rosenthal ..... (Guatemala)
Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions: Mr. Mselle

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Agenda item 116: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*) (A/55/746, A/55/750 and A/55/803)

Reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services

1. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) introduced the reports of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS) on the follow-up audit of the implementation of procurement reform (A/55/746), the inspection of the outcome of the consolidation of the three former economic and social departments into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (A/55/750) and the inspection of the consolidation of technical support services in the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (A/55/803).

2. OIOS had first reviewed the status of procurement reform in 1997. It had found that significant progress had been made, but had recommended improvements in such areas as planning, granting of exceptions to the requirement for obtaining bids and proposals, training of field mission procurement officers and reliability of the vendor roster. The follow-up audit was intended primarily to verify that the Office's recommendations and those of the High-level Group of Experts on Procurement and of various oversight bodies had been implemented and to identify any new issues that might have developed. He was pleased to report that management had diligently implemented most of the aforementioned recommendations and had initiated several other improvements aimed at streamlining procedures and increasing the transparency and objectivity of the bidding process. In addition, significant efforts had been made to increase the participation of developing countries in the procurement process.

3. OIOS had reviewed 51 procurement cases, representing one fifth of the total value of United Nations business in 1999, and had identified several areas that required attention. Financial rule 110.17 (a) stipulated that any contract in respect of a series of related requisitions exceeding $200,000 must be submitted to the Headquarters Committee on Contracts for review. The use of the calendar year as the period of reference under that rule created gaps in the Committee's oversight, since awards made to the same vendor in different calendar years but within a 12-month period would not be taken into account. That situation would not occur if the period of reference was instead the 12-month period immediately preceding the award. Moreover, the consolidation of purchases would be further enhanced and managers would be more aware of the aggregate value of recent awards to a particular contractor.

4. OIOS had found that decisions to procure air transport services through letters of assist with Governments rather than commercial carriers were not adequately documented and were taken unilaterally by the Department of Peacekeeping Operations. In such cases, the Department's Field Administration and Logistics Division (FALD) should provide the Procurement Division with written confirmation that the conditions for using letters of assist had been met before making decisions to contract with Governments. In that connection, the Procurement Division should seek feedback from vendors who did not respond to invitations to bid for air transportation services contracts. The information obtained could be used to develop additional strategies to encourage prospective carriers to bid.

5. The Office for Central Support Services should ensure that recommendations made by the Office of Legal Affairs and the Headquarters Committee on Contracts concerning procurement matters were fully implemented with a view to minimizing cost inefficiencies. Any exceptions to the agreed procedures must be fully accounted for. Lastly, the Procurement Division should take steps to enhance monitoring of low-value procurement cases and establish accountability for delays. To that end, assignments given to procurement assistants should include target completion dates for each commodity, and major departures from the target dates should be closely monitored.

6. Both the Secretariat and Member States had a stake in procurement reform. He was therefore pleased to note that both the Department of Management and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations had accepted the recommendations of OIOS and had taken initial steps to implement them.

7. Introducing the report on the inspection of the outcome of the consolidation of the three former

economic and social departments into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (A/55/750), he said that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/244 of 23 December 1999, OIOS had undertaken an inspection to review the outcome of the consolidation of the three former economic and social departments into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The review had primarily addressed whether the reform had fulfilled the three strategic goals of making the normative, analytical and operational functions clearer and more consistent with each other; providing more effective policy support to intergovernmental bodies; and improving the coordination of United Nations activities in the socio-economic area through integrated policy advice. OIOS had concluded that, as a result of the consolidation, policy and programme activities were now better coordinated and effective substantive support was provided to the intergovernmental machinery. Analytical, normative and operational activities were carried out in a more mutually reinforcing manner. A notable achievement had been the introduction of information technology into all the work of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in particular, a new on-line system for programme performance management.

8. The review had generated eight recommendations. The first was that more needed to be done to foster effective interaction among the relevant intergovernmental bodies with a view to advancing the cross-cutting goals of the United Nations conferences and summits on socio-economic issues. The second was that the evaluation of development cooperation activities must be improved. The third and fourth recommendations urged the Department of Economic and Social Affairs to develop, in consultation with the secretariats of the Executive Committee for Economic and Social Affairs, monitoring modalities to ensure follow-up on committee and Organization-wide executive decisions, particularly the current arrangements for monitoring, evaluation and reporting on the Development Account projects. Fifth, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs must ensure that strategic coordination at the top inter-agency level was translated into effective cooperation in specific areas at the lower levels of the subsidiary machinery of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). Sixth, the Department should ensure that interdisciplinary interaction among its professionals became a permanent feature of its work culture. Seventh, steps should be taken to continue the development of information and communication technology and, eighth, resources must be identified to continue and promote successful projects, such as the Population Information Network (POPIN).

9. Overall, OIOS was of the view that the amalgamation of departments had been positive and had strengthened the manner in which issues were addressed at the intergovernmental level. He would welcome comments and guidance from Committee members.

10. Introducing the report on the inspection of the consolidation of technical support services in the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services (A/55/803), he said that the Secretary-General had established the Department in 1997 in the context of his management reform measures. A priority of the reform effort had been to strengthen the coherence, quality and efficiency of technical support services provided by the Secretariat to intergovernmental bodies. It had been anticipated that the new Department would provide conference services in a new way; performance would be benchmarked against clear norms and standards of quality and timeliness and there would be increased flexibility to deploy resources to respond quickly to the needs of intergovernmental bodies.

11. The inspection had found that the establishment of the Department of General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services had enhanced the efficiency of services provided to Member States. Time-consuming interdepartmental consultations of previous years had been reduced, allowing for better planning in the allocation of services and facilities and a more rational use of resources. With the consolidation of technical services, the programme budget for 1998-1999 had reflected a reduction of some 80 posts in the Department. There had been a decrease of about 10 per cent in its requirements for temporary assistance for meetings in the 2000-2001 programme budget.

12. Most of the changes introduced by the Department had been the result of the use of information technology. OIOS had recommended that even greater use should be made of information technology in order to improve internal processes and service deliveries. The Office had also made recommendations concerning document submission, operational guidelines, client feedback and performance measurement. In conclusion, he thanked

those Member States which had responded to the Office's questionnaire seeking feedback on the Department's services.

13. **Mr. Kendall** (Argentina) said that, overall, the report in document A/55/803 was very positive and showed that the Department had made major strides in attaining the objectives established by the Secretary-General. His delegation was particularly pleased that the consolidation of the services provided by the Department had improved planning capacity, resulting in a better utilization of resources. Indeed, further consolidation of conference services might bring even further improvements.

14. The low response rate (24 per cent) to the Survey of Member States (2000) elaborated by OIOS (A/55/803, annex I) was disappointing; nonetheless, the Survey itself had proved to be a useful mechanism. His delegation was concerned that the distribution of documents had not improved; the problem of delays in the issuance of documents was complex, and the quantity and volume of documents did not make matters easier. Greater attention must be devoted to finding a rapid solution to that problem. The Department should continue to experiment with the application of new conference service technologies and inform the Committee of the results obtained and additional requirements.

15. His delegation agreed with the recommendations contained in the report. In particular, it believed that the Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly Affairs and Conference Services should consult with the Committee on Conferences to identify meeting demands in order to adjust servicing capacity and limit meeting duration (A/55/803, para. 72). It should be borne in mind that the Department was already implementing many of the OIOS recommendations.

16. **Ms. Wynes** (United States of America) expressed satisfaction at the progress made in reforming the procurement process. She urged the Secretariat to implement promptly the recommendations contained in the report of OIOS (A/55/746). Her delegation welcomed, in particular, the recommendation regarding the change in the period of reference under financial rule 110.17 (a).

17. Turning to the report on the inspection of the outcome of the consolidation of the three former economic and social departments into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (A/55/750), she praised the comprehensive inspection conducted by OIOS. The Secretary-General was to be commended for his wisdom in establishing the Department, which had made many significant contributions to the United Nations over the past three years through its analytical works, educational and promotional materials and its management information systems. In addition, the Department had made the Integrated Meeting and Documentation Information System (IMDIS) a benefit for the entire Organization. She welcomed the quarterly reviews of IMDIS and the Department's efforts to incorporate it into its evaluation of programme performance. Her delegation also strongly supported the Population Information Network (POPIN), which should be provided, if at all possible, with the necessary funds.

18. **Mr. Mirmohammad** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that his delegation was unable to make any substantive comments on the three reports of OIOS because of the late issuance of those documents. He pointed out that, in accordance with General Assembly resolution 55/222, if a report was issued late, the reasons for the delay should be indicated when the report was introduced. The Committee must have sufficient time to consider the important issues dealt with in the three reports, particularly the report on the inspection of the outcome of the consolidation of the three former economic and social departments into the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (A/55/750), which was of special interest to developing countries.

19. **Mr. Chandra** (India), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, expressed support for the comments made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding the late issuance of documentation. With respect to the report of OIOS on the follow-up audit of the implementation of procurement reform (A/55/746), he said that the Group of 77 and China welcomed the steps taken by the Procurement Division to streamline procedures and increase the transparency and objectivity of the procurement process. Referring to the proposal to change the period of reference under financial rule 110.17 (a), he asked whether such a change would be compatible with established practices and procedures. With regard to the recommendation that the Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services, when appropriate, should ensure that recommendations made by the Office of Legal Affairs and the Headquarters

Committee on Contracts concerning procurement matters were fully implemented, he sought clarification concerning the use of the words "when appropriate". His delegation supported the recommendation that the Procurement Division should conduct a market survey of available air transportation services contractors in each region where the United Nations operated. It would, however, prefer a time-bound exercise. It would be helpful, when the issue was considered in informal consultations, to have data, broken down by region, on the award of air transportation services contracts. He agreed that there was a need to enhance the management of low-value purchases and to improve coordination between FALD and the Procurement Division, and he looked forward to seeing concrete proposals in that regard.

20. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services) said that he regretted the late issuance of the three reports of OIOS. The delay had been due, in large part, to the need to await responses from the departments concerned. He would convey the comments of the representative of India to the Procurement Division, which would be responsible for the follow-up to the issues raised. He was pleased to note that the Department of Management had undertaken to implement the recommendations of OIOS as quickly as possible. His Office would be monitoring that process closely.

Agenda item 127: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/55/759)

Agenda item 128: Financing of the International Criminal Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Genocide and Other Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of Rwanda and Rwandan Citizens Responsible for Genocide and Other Such Violations Committed in the Territory of Neighbouring States between 1 January and 31 December 1994 (*continued*) (A/55/759)

21. **Mr. Nair** (Under-Secretary-General for Internal Oversight Services), introducing the report of the Office on the investigation into possible fee-splitting arrangements between defence counsel and indigent detainees at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (A/55/759), said that the investigation had been initiated at the request of the Controller of the United Nations. The request to OIOS, in June 2000, had followed the report of the Expert Group to Conduct a Review of the Effective Operation and Functioning of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (A/54/634), which had referred to allegations of "fee-splitting arrangements" between indigent detainees and their counsel. OIOS had found evidence that several former defence counsels assigned at both Tribunals had either been solicited and/or had accepted requests for fee-splitting arrangements made to them by their respective clients. There was also evidence that one current defence counsel at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda had rejected a detainee's request for fee-splitting and had informed the registrar thereof. Lastly, OIOS had found that some defence teams at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda had made arrangements for gifts to their clients, their clients' relatives and other forms of indirect support and maintenance, and that some defence teams at both Tribunals had hired friends or relatives of their clients as defence investigators.

22. Despite their efforts to look into the matter, neither Tribunal had been successful in producing evidence to substantiate ongoing fee-splitting arrangements. OIOS, however, had found credible information about possible ongoing fee-splitting arrangements at both Tribunals. That information needed to be further developed, refined and corroborated by specific investigative steps. OIOS would pursue its efforts in consultation with the Registries and report further as appropriate.

23. The investigation had further shown that the problem of fee-splitting was linked to other matters, such as the process of selecting and changing assigned counsel, the fees paid to defence teams and the use of frivolous motions and other delaying tactics before the Trial Chambers. The two Tribunals and the Controller had been provided with draft copies of the report, and their comments and suggestions had been incorporated where appropriate.

Agenda item 127: Financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (*continued*) (A/55/517/Add.1)

24. **Mr. Sach** (Director, Programme Planning and Budget Division), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the financing of the International Tribunal for the Prosecution of Persons Responsible for Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law Committed in the Territory of the Former Yugoslavia since 1991 (A/55/517/Add.1), said that the resource requirements for 2001 of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia had been presented in document A/55/517. Following the preparation of that report, the Security Council had decided, in its resolution 1329 (2000), to establish a pool of ad litem judges in the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and to enlarge the membership of the Appeals Chambers of both the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It had also decided to amend articles 12, 13 and 14 of the Statute of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. The new article 12 provided for the use in the Trial Chambers of a maximum at any one time of nine ad litem judges. The report before the Committee contained the estimated supplementary resource requirements for 2001 for the use of ad litem judges in the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, which would amount to $5,280,900 gross. While the report had been issued in December 2000, the General Assembly had decided to defer consideration of the revised estimates for the Tribunal pending the approval of the conditions of services of the ad litem judges, which were contained in document A/55/756.

25. In its resolution 55/225 of 23 December 2000, the Assembly had decided to appropriate an amount of $108,487,700 gross to the Special Account for the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia for 2001. The additional resource requirements contained in the report before the Committee, which were based on the use of six ad litem judges during the latter half of 2001, would bring that amount to $113,768,600 gross. That figure included a provision for 54 additional temporary posts to cope with the anticipated increase in the workload of the Tribunal, which would bring the total number of posts to 968. Further information was contained in annex IX to document A/55/517.

26. The current information on the expenditure of the Tribunal's assessed funds indicated that there were sufficient resources, including the unencumbered balance in 2000 and anticipated interest income to cover the additional requirements in their entirety. No additional assessment would therefore be necessary.

27. **Ms. Brzak-Metzler** (Office of Human Resources Management), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on conditions of service of the ad litem judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (A/55/756), said that the report had been prepared in response to General Assembly resolution 55/225 and the request of the Advisory Committee. The activities of the Tribunal had undergone a rapid expansion, hence the need to expand its trial capacity. By Security Council resolution 1329 (2000) a pool of ad litem judges had been established and the membership of the Appeals Chamber enlarged. The Secretary-General's proposals, contained in paragraph 20 of the report, were based on the conditions of service for permanent judges of the international tribunals. It should also be recalled that the General Assembly would review those conditions of service at its fifty-sixth session.

28. **Mr. Mselle** (Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ)) said that the Advisory Committee had carefully examined the report of the Secretary-General contained in document A/55/756. Article 13 quater of the statute of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia provided that, during their service with the Tribunal, ad litem judges would benefit from the same terms and conditions, mutatis mutandis, as permanent judges. The permanent judges were elected for a term of four years and were subject to re-election. On the other hand, an ad litem judge would be appointed to serve on one or more trials for a cumulative period of less than three years. The appointments need not be consecutive and an ad litem judge was not eligible for reappointment. The service of an ad litem judge was therefore of a much more temporary nature and could be intermittent.

29. The Advisory Committee had concluded that, in preparing his proposals in document A/55/756, the Secretary-General had not taken full account of the provision that the terms of service of ad litem judges should be, mutatis mutandis, those of the permanent

judges of the Tribunal. The Committee had borne that important factor in mind in preparing its report in document A/55/806. It agreed with the recommendations of the Secretary-General on salary payments and on his proposals for travel and relocation allowance and pension benefits. In paragraph 14 of its report, the Committee made an important observation which, if accepted by the General Assembly, should constitute part of the contents of the letter of appointment of an ad litem judge.

30. For the reasons stated in paragraphs 7 and 11 of its report, the Committee had concluded that a lump sum survivor benefit and an education allowance were not applicable to ad litem judges. It recommended that disability payment be limited to injury or illness attributable to service with the Tribunal. Finally, its comments on the subject of residence were covered in paragraph 12 of its report.

31. The Advisory Committee agreed with the request for 54 additional temporary posts. The Secretary-General estimated revised estimates for the Tribunal at $113.8 million, or an increase of $5.3 million over the amount appropriated by General Assembly resolution 55/225. The Committee had been informed that resources available to the Tribunal would, at the current stage, obviate the need for immediate assessment of additional resources. The Advisory Committee therefore recommended that the Secretary-General should be given commitment authority up to $5.3 million gross and that additional appropriation and assessment, if any, would be considered by the General Assembly in autumn 2001 in the context of the performance report for the Tribunal.

32. **Mr. Nesser** (Sweden), speaking on behalf of the European Union, the associated countries Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, and, in addition, Cyprus, Malta and Turkey and Liechtenstein, said that the European Union attached great importance to the follow-up of the troubling allegations of fee-splitting at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

33. The will of the Tribunals to guarantee to all indicted persons the highest standards of justice and the best conditions under which to present a defence must not be abused by practices constituting a blatant violation of the honesty, independence and integrity expected of counsel and leading to frivolous or dilatory motions for the sole purpose of increasing artificially the costs of defence. It was clearly unacceptable that persons suspected of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes could profit from their detention to enrich themselves at the expense of the international community.

34. The European Union noted that the OIOS enquiry was part of an effort to identify and put an end to those abuses. It underlined that fee-splitting arrangements were closely linked to the status of indigence recognized to detainees by the Tribunals. The European Union highlighted the observation that the United Nations had expended $8.5 million in 1999 and another $8.5 million in 2000 in payment of defence fees, even though some detainees possibly had the means to pay for legal defence. The European Union took note of the conclusions and recommendations of OIOS and of the observations of both Tribunals on those recommendations. It wished both Tribunals to take steps to implement them.

35. With regard to the conditions of service of ad litem judges of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the European Union subscribed to the proposals of the Secretary-General as modified to take into account the observations and recommendations of the Advisory Committee in paragraphs 7, 11, 12, 14 and 15 of its report (A/55/806). It also endorsed the recommendation of ACABQ on the Secretary-General's estimate of resource requirements.

Agenda item 117: Programme budget for the biennium 2000-2001 (*continued*)

Integrated Management Information System (*continued*) (A/55/7/Add.8 and A/55/632)

Asbestos problem (*continued*) (A/55/7/Add.1 and A/55/135)

Facilities management (*continued*) (A/54/628; A/55/7/Add.1 and A/55/210)

Task Force on Common Services (*continued*) (A/55/7/Add.1 and A/55/461)

Profitability of commercial activities (*continued*) (A/55/7/Add.1 and A/55/546)

Internal and external printing practices (continued) (A/55/7/Add.1 and A/55/132)

Construction of additional conference facilities at Bangkok and Addis Ababa (continued) (A/55/7/Add.7 and A/55/493)

Security arrangements (continued) (A/55/511)

36. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) said, with regard to the construction of additional conference facilities at Addis Ababa, that his delegation had taken note of the willingness of the Secretary-General to leave the fund balance of $7,702,600 in the budget until all related matters had been considered. It also took note of his proposals to upgrade conference facilities in Bangkok and Nairobi.

37. As to the Integrated Management Information System (IMIS), his delegation hoped that the concept of an electronic United Nations, as mentioned in document A/55/7/Add.8, paragraph 11, would be clearly defined, with all its implications. It also called for follow-up to the recommendation contained in paragraph 12. His delegation noted with satisfaction the cost savings realized through internal printing at Headquarters and at Geneva and hoped that other organizations of the system would follow suit. Table 6 of document A/55/132, comparing internal and external printing costs, gave a clear picture of the potential savings. The United Nations should make all necessary efforts in that area to generate economies for the budget. He would also like to know the outcome of the proposed cost evaluation system in Geneva.

38. He requested clarification of paragraph 5 of the report on proposed measures to improve the profitability of the commercial activities of the United Nations (A/55/546) and stressed that recourse to external resources should not have an adverse effect on existing staff. With regard to the cafeteria, the current contract with Restaurant Associates would expire shortly, and he wondered if any bids had been received from other firms. His delegation hoped that any actions by the Secretariat would be consistent with the General Assembly resolution on that subject adopted at the fifty-fifth session.

39. **Mr. Adam** (Israel) said that his delegation was pleased at the progress made towards the full implementation of IMIS, in particular for payroll, attendance and related applications, which were the most complicated to build and implement. In the progress report contained in document A/55/632, it was surprised to find no reference to the use of IMIS in the area of procurement. He asked if it would be possible to use the approved vendor registration form for other United Nations agencies through that system.

40. Paragraph 49 of the report alluded to the difficulties in implementing IMIS for peacekeeping missions in the light of local conditions, a statement which he found perplexing. Given the plans to move the system to the Web mentioned in paragraph 56, he wondered whether peacekeeping missions could access the system from the Internet. Finally, attention should be paid to potential security breaches through the Internet; he would like to know what steps were being taken to protect the security and integrity of IMIS.

41. **Ms. Bentley-Anderson** (United States of America) said that the report on internal printing practices was useful and positive and made it clear that the United Nations was doing a good job in that area. Her delegation was disappointed that other agencies were not using United Nations reproduction and printing facilities, while it recognized the practical problems involved. It encouraged continued efforts by the Task Force on Common Services to engender greater cost savings and economies of scale in printing and reproduction.

42. Her delegation remained in awe of the sheer volume of pages produced annually, which in 1999 had amounted to over half a billion. Increased use of electronic distribution of documents and a review of documentation issued seemed to be in order.

43. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), replying to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, said that the concept of an electronic United Nations was dealt with in document A/55/780, which outlined an information technology strategy for the Secretariat as a whole. The recommendation in paragraph 12 of the report of ACABQ on the matter (A/55/7/Add.8) was receiving active follow-up.

44. Positions in commercial activities would be staffed with people with the relevant experience, which did not constitute outsourcing. The catering contract with Restaurant Associates expired in 2003. Since it was a major contract, the bidding process did indeed require advance preparation, but had not yet begun.

45. **Mr. Roz** (Director, Information Technology Services Division), responding to the question posed by the representative of Israel, said that the process of certifying vendors took place outside the United Nations system. Discussions on an inter-agency exchange of information on vendor certification were already under way, particularly within the framework of the Inter-Agency Procurement Services Office (IAPSO), based in Copenhagen, under the umbrella of the United Nations Development Programme.

46. The answer to the question with regard to difficulties in implementing IMIS for peacekeeping missions lay in paragraphs 49 to 51 of document A/55/632, particularly the reference to the upgrade of the system and the porting to the Web. The conditions of peacekeeping missions varied greatly. In extreme cases, as in East Timor, telecommunications might be cut off for several weeks. Thus, a solution that provided for flexibility and capability in both local and remote operations was needed. The porting to the World Wide Web was a step in that direction.

47. As for security, without disclosing the details, he wished to assure the Committee that all the latest security technology was being embedded in the system. In addition, several audit reports used by his Division and the Office of Internal Oversight Services made it possible to monitor activities on an ongoing basis and to detect any suspect or irregular activities.

48. **Mr. Crosa** (Director, Interpretation, Meetings and Publishing Division), responding to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic, said that the commercial costing system mentioned in the report of the Secretary-General on internal and external printing practices of the Organization (A/55/132, para. 21) was now installed both at Headquarters and at the United Nations Office at Geneva. As explained by ACABQ in paragraph 32 of document A/55/7/Add.1, that system, known as "PrintPak" provided the cost of individual jobs, based on their respective technical specifications, materials and staff time required, plus a discretionary percentage covering indirect costs. With that costing system in place in both duty stations, it would now be possible to provide comparative costing information for both Headquarters jobs and jobs handled in Geneva. His colleagues in Geneva were already engaged in active negotiations with other Secretariat entities, particularly the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, which were regular recipients of costing information and routed for internal production certain technically demanding jobs that, until a few months earlier, had been placed with external printers.

49. **Mr. Niwa** (Assistant Secretary-General for Central Support Services), responding to a question from the representative of the United States, said that his Department was indeed contemplating a role for printing services in the common services scheme. In fact, there had been a briefing on printing services and a demonstration for the funds and programmes participating in the common services undertaking. He would continue to make every effort to match the supplier, i.e., the Secretariat printing service, with recipients of the service, namely, the funds and programmes.

Agenda item 116: Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations (*continued*)

Agenda item 123: Human resources management (*continued*) (A/55/423 and A/55/423/Add.1)

Report of the Joint Inspection Unit on senior-level appointments in the United Nations and its programmes and funds (*continued*) (A/55/423 and Add.1)

50. **Mr. Zorigt** (Mongolia) welcomed the efforts by the Secretariat to increase the representation of unrepresented and under-represented Member States at senior and decision-making levels and the progress achieved to that end in recent years. His delegation agreed that the power of appointment of staff members, including to senior-level posts, rested with the Secretary-General, and that a clear-cut distinction between the functions of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General was fundamental to the efficient functioning of the Organization. It also continued to believe that the criteria of efficiency, competence and integrity were of crucial importance in the recruitment process. In that context, it was incomprehensible that nearly half the Member States, mostly developing countries, were still unrepresented at the D-1 level and above. He expressed the hope that the special attention being given to candidates from unrepresented and under-represented countries would translate speedily into the increased representation of developing countries.

51. He decried the persistence of tailor-made job descriptions and inconsistencies between vacancy announcements, job descriptions and individual department requirements in evaluating prospective candidates for D-1 posts. His delegation would welcome efforts to develop generic formats for vacancy announcements within the larger framework of human resources management reform. Since high performance should be the primary prerequisite for appointment and promotion of staff to senior-level posts, the introduction of the performance appraisal system (PAS) for senior managers was a positive step. His delegation welcomed efforts to refine PAS in the light of past experience and stressed the importance of its universal application to all staff, including at the senior level.

52. Greater efforts must be made to improve gender balance at the senior level, and, in particular, to recruit women from developing countries. As things stood, women accounted for over 62 per cent of the General Service staff but only 28 per cent of Directors. The widest possible geographical distribution and improved gender balance were vital to the reform of human resources management.

53. **Mr. Niiya** (Japan), referring to JIU recommendation VI, expressed deep concern that only five out of some 300 posts at the D-1 level or above subject to geographical distribution were occupied by Japanese nationals. He hoped the Committee would address that problem when considering the representation of Member States in the Secretariat.

54. **Mr. Kudryavtsev** (Joint Inspection Unit) said he hoped that the report of JIU would stimulate the Committee's discussion of senior-level appointments in informal consultations and lead to constructive suggestions on improving the situation.

55. **Mr. Beissel** (Director, Operational Services Division), speaking on behalf of the Secretary-General, thanked the Joint Inspection Unit for its report and said that Committee members' comments on it would be taken into account.

56. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) expressed his delegation's full agreement with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran, on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, in the discussion of senior-level appointments at the previous meeting.

Other matters

57. **Mr. Nakkari** (Syrian Arab Republic) suggested that, in order to comply with the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, draft texts should be distributed at least 24 hours in advance of their adoption. Moreover, no draft text should be submitted until all the relevant documentation was available.

58. The Chairman said that he would discuss the Syrian request with the Bureau and that every effort would be made to accommodate it.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.